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ABSTRACT

This instructional guide is designed to assist those teaching intensive English-as-a-second-language (ESL) courses geared toward Indochinese refugees. It offers suggestions for making culturally sensitive and responsive decisions while providing basic cultural orientation and second language instruction to refugees. The first part of the guide presents teaching implications as they relate to various assumptions about learning in general and also learning a new language and a new culture. The second part of the guide describes a series of teaching practices that have been identified as being effective both in preparing to teach and in actual teaching. (MN)

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International Catholic Migration Commission

GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTION

Intensive English as a Second Language/Cultural Orientation Training Program

Philippine Refugee Processing Center
Morong, Bataan, Philippines

CE 042804

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APRIL . 1985

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION

PROGRAM GOAL

In the spirit of cooperation with the PRPC community and U.S. resettlement efforts, the goal of the ICMC IESL/CO Program is to prepare Indochinese refugees for resettlement and life in the U.S. and to enable them to become productive, self-fulfilling members of American society. Through quality instruction, the program aims to provide English language, cultural orientation and learning skills in a culturally sensitive and responsive environment.

INTRODUCTION

The GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTION embodies the philosophy of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) insofar as the organization exists to help prepare Indochinese refugees for resettlement in the United States. It incorporates assumptions about teaching and learning based on the needs of both staff and students, with the goal of developing a supportive learning community. It offers guidelines for making decisions in the learning process - a process which involves the teacher, supervisor and the learners themselves.

LEARNING is an innate human capability which enables us to speak a language, to solve problems, to make decisions, to function as part of a society, and, in essence, to live in the richest sense of the word. Within all humans is the potential to learn a new language, to learn new information, and to learn strategies for dealing with new situations. Learning is especially crucial for the adjustment of people to new lives in a new culture and can be helped along by their own desire to better prepare themselves for the future. This belief in people's capacity and desire to

learn is the basis for the International Catholic Migration Commission's (ICMC) Intensive English as a Second Language and Cultural Orientation Program (IESL/CO).

TEACHING is a continuous series of decisions made with the goal of promoting and accelerating learning. The process of teaching cannot be separated from the goal of learning; the two are inextricably bound. Successful teaching results in learning.

SUPERVISING the learning and teaching processes also involves an understanding of the learners and how they learn, and an understanding of teaching implications that arise from the learning process. The goal of supervision is to ensure that teachers provide learners with quality instruction so that learning is promoted.

Because individual learners learn in a variety of ways, and because teachers bring their individual talents and skills to the classroom, there cannot be a single "right" way to teach or to learn. The complicated endeavors of learning and teaching are addressed in this document.

Quality instruction at ICMC was addressed in the ICMC Instructional Model, developed in June, 1983. This model provided a general framework for instruction and was based on the premise that learning is an interactive and cooperative effort between the teacher and the learner.

While the general framework and principles of the Instructional Model remain valid, data collected from all staff in a program-wide evaluation effort in May, 1984 suggested that it needed more specific reference to language learning and language teaching, primary thrusts of ICMC's instructional programs. What followed then was the evolution of the current document as a result of great efforts by supervisor task forces and input from various other sectors of the program. This Guide therefore purposefully includes teaching implications pertinent to adult Southeast Asian refugees who are learning a new language and preparing to live in a new culture. In a much broader sense, it also serves as a guide for the future direction of our program.

THE ICMC GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO MAIN PARTS:

PART I

LEARNING ASSUMPTIONS AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

The learning process is examined through various assumptions about learners and learning. Teaching implications are presented as they relate to the learning assumptions.

PART II

TEACHING

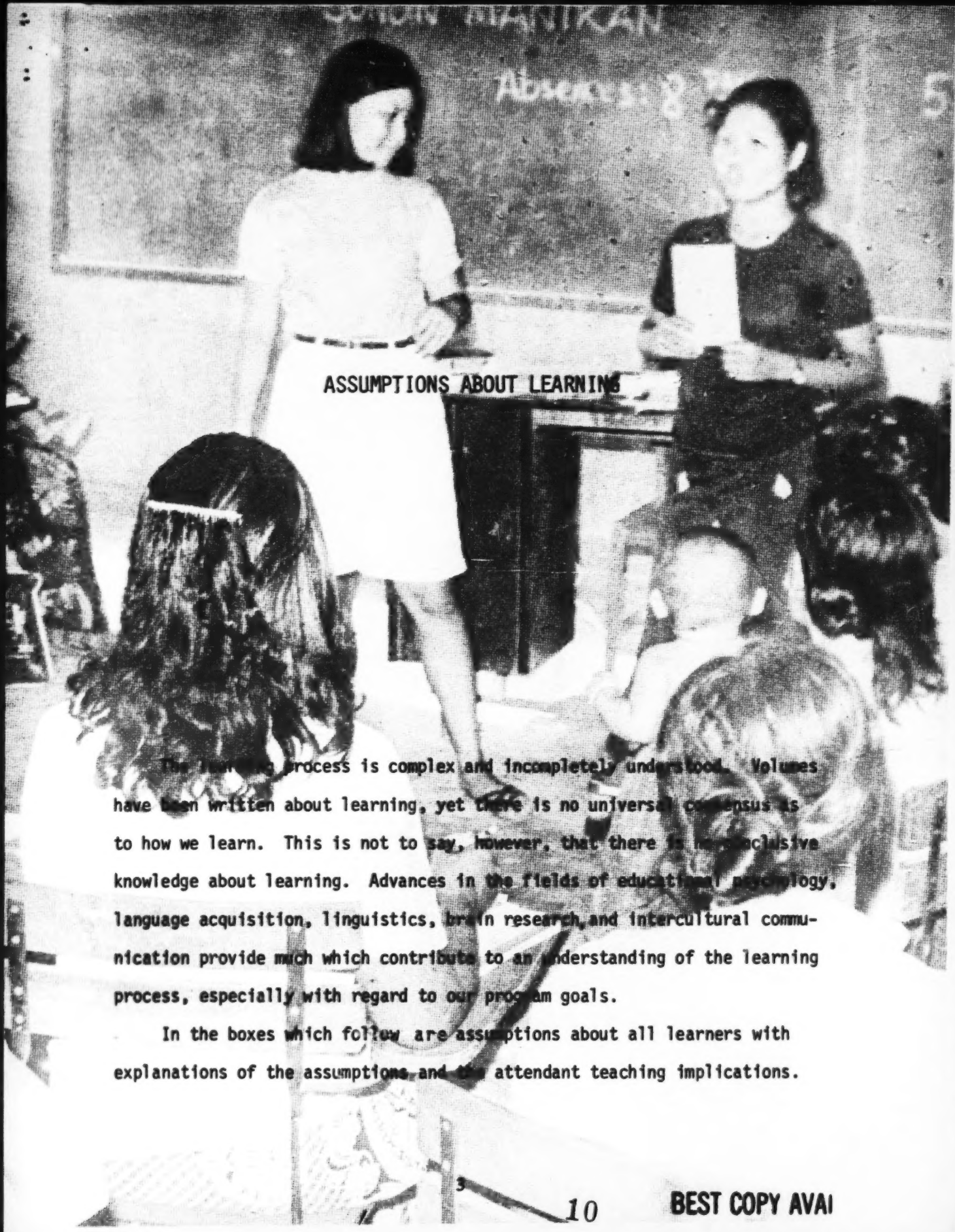
Practices which promote effective teaching are identified. These include practices which are effective in preparing to teach as well as in actual teaching.

This guide presents concepts, considerations, assumptions and guidelines, not dogma. ICMC is an ecumenical community of learners, teachers, supervisors and support staff with a variety of backgrounds and of learning and teaching experiences, from which the organization can draw its strength. This GUIDE, therefore, is intended to serve as a framework which will help the staff make informed decisions in working towards the goal of quality instruction.

LEARNING ASSUMPTIONS

AND

TEACHING IMPLICATIONS



ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

The learning process is complex and incompletely understood. Volumes have been written about learning, yet there is no universal consensus as to how we learn. This is not to say, however, that there is inconclusive knowledge about learning. Advances in the fields of educational psychology, language acquisition, linguistics, brain research, and intercultural communication provide much which contributes to an understanding of the learning process, especially with regard to our program goals.

In the boxes which follow are assumptions about all learners with explanations of the assumptions and the attendant teaching implications.

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PEOPLE LEARN BEST WHAT THEY NEED OR WANT TO LEARN

Some people learn because they have a perceived need (to earn an "A" in a course, to gain proficiency in a language to get a job) while others learn because they want to -- they get pleasure from learning (learning a language for the enjoyment of knowing it, learning about food preparation in another culture because it is inherently pleasing to the learner).

The need or desire to learn is commonly called motivation. Motivation based on a goal that is unrelated to learning itself is called extrinsic (Hunter)[1] or instrumental (Gardner, Lambert).[2] Motivation based on a goal of learning for its own sake is called intrinsic (Hunter) or integrative (Gardner, Lambert).

In general, once the extrinsic goal has been reached (The "A" achieved), learner motivation decreases. However, when the learner is propelled intrinsically, motivation is sustained. It is important to note that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may exist simultaneously, and that one may lead to the other. For instance, learning English may be an economic necessity for a refugee (extrinsic motivation), but as proficiency is gained the refugee may continue to study the language for the pleasure of expression (intrinsic motivation).

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE MOTIVATION TO LEARN

LEARNER INTEREST IN THE CONTENT TO BE LEARNED INCREASES THE DESIRE TO LEARN. In general, the higher the level of interest, the stronger the desire to learn. Interest is increased when there is a relationship between the content to be learned and the learner's life. Interest can also be affected by the novelty of the content. New and different content may have more inherent interest than the familiar or what seems to be familiar.

> To help learners understand why they are learning what they are learning, the teacher needs to make the lesson relevant to learners' needs and interests. Whenever possible, the teacher can relate the lesson to the "here-and-now" reality of the students' experience. When the learning task seems to be unrelated to the learners' needs and interests, the teacher must help them see the connection between the lesson and the learners' future lives.

LEARNERS NEED TO KNOW HOW THEY ARE DOING AS THEY LEARN. As learners get useful feedback about their performance, sometimes referred to as knowledge of results,[3] the learners' desire to learn is increased. Herem has stated, "Learner effectiveness depends on feedback."[4] Knowledge of success, and sometimes of failure, can motivate the learners and provide information to promote successful learning.[5]

> An important function of the teacher is to let learners know how they are doing. This means acknowledging responses, giving feedback, praising learners as appropriate, and letting learners know when they can't be understood or when their information is incorrect. A vital part of the feedback process is letting learners know how they can improve.

SUCCESS INCREASES MOTIVATION TO LEARN. Dr. Jerome Kagan of Harvard has written, "One of the few sound principles possessed by psychology is that individuals will cease investing effort...if they have no expectation of success."[6] Conversely, when learners experience success, their motivation to continue learning will increase.

> Teachers can increase learner motivation by helping learners be successful. This can be done by reducing the level of difficulty, by providing more guidance, by providing more practice, or by giving more models. It can also be done by responding to students, expanding on their answers or comments, or extending communication to indicate that the learner is successfuly communicating. The teacher can decide when success will help increase learner motivation.

SOCIAL, PERSONAL, AND EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS INFLUENCE MOTIVATION. Each learner has a degree of self-esteem, anxiety about the learning situation, and a willingness to take risks. In addition, each learner has manifold experiences, characteristics, abilities, and aptitudes developed over a lifetime. These inner conditions form what Krashen and others refer to as the "affective filter" in language learning. Indeed, Krashen states, "Motivational and attitudinal considerations are prior to linguistic considerations."[7] If learners feel positive about themselves, the probability of learning is enhanced. If learners are overly anxious or feel threatened, then learning is likely to be inhibited.

> The classroom atmosphere is created largely by the teacher, but it is also created by the attitudes and interactions of the class as a whole. The teacher's aim is to make learning challenging. At the same time the teacher tries to establish a comfortable, low-anxiety environment in which the learners feel able to express themselves, to ask questions, and to take risks. Whatever the teacher does to create a more pleasant and supportive learning environment increases the probability of learner motivation.

PEOPLE LEARN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS, AT VARYING RATES AND IN VARYING DEGREES

Because individuals are equipped with unique abilities and aptitudes, how and at what speed they learn will differ.

FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE RATE AND AMOUNT OF LEARNING:

THE INDIVIDUAL'S LEARNING STYLE AFFECTS THE RATE AND DEGREE OF LEARNING. Learning style can be defined as the characteristic way in which individuals use their minds. Learning style is not related to mental ability, intelligence, or actual performance.[8] Individuals differ in their ability to learn depending upon the content to be learned. They also differ in their approach to the learning task, their educational and sociocultural backgrounds, and personal experience.

Learning style defines the learner's preferences. Learners have their preferences for individual work or a group activity, for visual or aural input, for reading or discussing. Long suggests, "Learning difficulties may be more of a function of the way that learning is structured than of intelligence [for adult learners.]."[9]

> To teach each of the many learners in a class, the teacher recognizes that every student has an individual learning style. Realizing that learners approach learning in different ways, the teacher provides a variety of learning activities and types of input, rather than adopting a standard style of presentation. The effective teacher also promotes learning using discussion, experiential activities, reading, formal lectures, writing, problem-solving, slides, and videotapes.

MEANING IS A PRINCIPAL FACTOR AFFECTING HOW MUCH AND HOW FAST INDIVIDUALS LEARN. Meaning implies understanding by the learner. Content acquires meaning when it is related to the learner's past experience or knowledge or if it is put into a context the learner can understand. The more easily the learner understands the content, the better it can be learned.

> The teacher helps to give meaning to the content to be learned and explores what is meaningful for the learners so they can relate the lesson to their own experience. Context for the new learning can be provided through realia, gestures, visuals, a roleplay, a situation, a reading, or other appropriate means.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS INCREASES THE RATE AND DEGREE OF LEARNING. When learners participate in the learning process, they share responsibility for their own learning. Learners actively participate in class by discussing, writing, following or giving directions--all of which are observable. Learners can also actively participate in ways not easily observed: thinking, watching, problem-solving, making decisions. "Involvement of the adult learner in planning and conducting educational activities is believed to be associated with achievement, attendance, and favorable attitudes," according to Huey B. Long.[10]

The effective teacher provides for and encourages active participation on the part of each learner through planned activities and situations, and by taking advantage of unplanned situations as well. The teacher not only allows for observable active participation, but also recognizes the need for learners to think about and assimilate what they are hearing and experiencing. This can be done by pausing at appropriate times or by allowing more time for learners to speak.

LEARNERS NEED TO PRACTICE WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING. Practice simply means using whatever is being learned to gain proficiency. Learning anything -- whether it is speaking a new language, being assertive, using a telephone or interviewing for a job -- generally necessitates practice. Practice can help ensure that learning takes place at a desirable rate and that learning is not forgotten. Without practice, progress may be very slow or there may be no learning at all.

Because learners need to practice whatever they are learning, the teacher supplies opportunities for learners to use and experiment with what they are learning. Opportunities for practice are interspersed throughout the class, and occur after the learners have received an adequate amount of input. The duration of the practice period is determined by the learners' abilities and interests. Effective practice is just long enough to allow meaningful participation and occurs at intervals for faster learning and longer retention. Where possible, the teacher can encourage independent practice outside the classroom through such means as homework and supplementary learning materials.

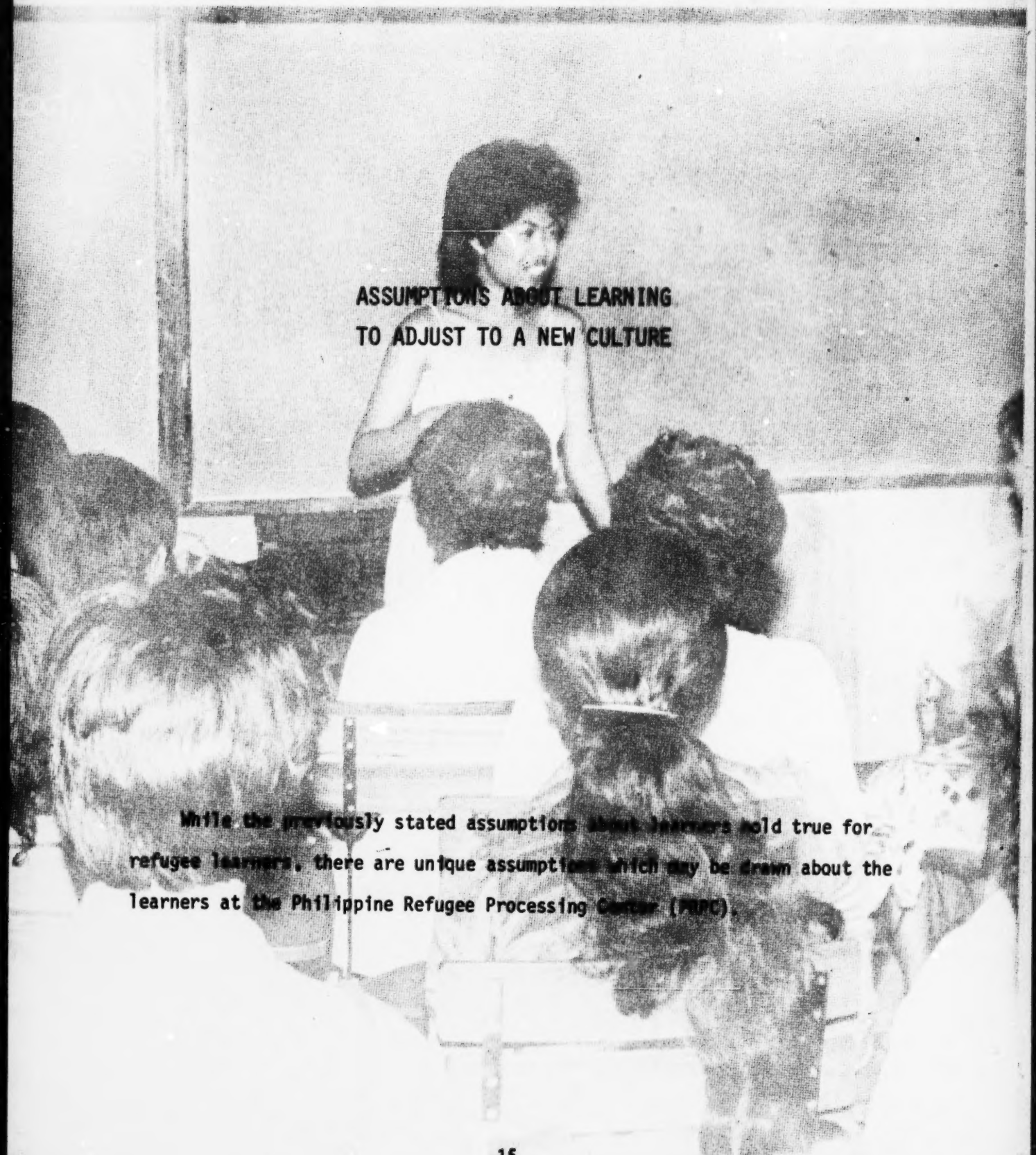
AN APPROPRIATE AND REALISTIC LEVEL OF ASPIRATION PRODUCTIVELY AFFECTS THE RATE AND DEGREE OF LEARNING. The learner's sense of what can be achieved is referred to as the level of aspiration. An unrealistic level of aspiration would be shown by a beginning language learner who expects to speak the target language without error. An unrealistic level of aspiration is likely to frustrate the learner and result in reduced learning. A learner with an appropriate level of aspiration can accept errors when learning a new language.

Learners are affected not only by their own expectations, but by the expectations of the teacher as well. If the teacher's expectations are too high or too low, the learner and the amount of learning may be affected. Learning is enhanced when the teacher sets an appropriate level of aspiration.

> The teacher can help learners set realistic levels of aspiration by letting them know what they should be able to achieve. It is also important to let the learners know when their expectations are unrealistic, and to help them understand why those expectations are not appropriate. The teacher sets individual expectations for learners based on their ability and unique individual characteristics.

THE RATE AND AMOUNT OF LEARNING ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE AMOUNT AND TIMING OF GUIDANCE RECEIVED. Learners often need a lot of feedback and assistance when learning something new. However, as learners gain proficiency, less guidance may be needed. In fact, too much guidance can hinder learning. The purpose of guidance is to assist learners until they are prepared to use the new learning independently.

Individuals vary in their approaches to learning and will need different kinds of assistance from the teacher. It is the teacher's task to be aware of what kind of support and guidance works best with individuals and groups of learners. One group may need lots of modeling and examples before attempting a roleplay while another group might only need a description of the situation before doing one. In general, learners benefit from a higher degree of guidance when learning new concepts or information.



ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING TO ADJUST TO A NEW CULTURE

While the previously stated assumptions about learners hold true for refugee learners, there are unique assumptions which may be drawn about the learners at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center (PRPC).

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REFUGEE LEARNERS COME TO PRPC WITH ABUNDANT AND DIVERSE EXPERIENCE

As a whole, Southeast Asian refugees come from different geographic locations, ethnic groups, language groups, educational backgrounds, religions and occupations. They are not homogeneous. In fact, the only common denominator may be that each refugee was forced to leave his or her homeland and must resettle in another country.

As the teacher prepares the learners for life in a new culture, he or she draws from the experiences of the learners and recognizes the need of many refugee learners to relate these experiences. The teacher respects the learners as individuals with varying backgrounds, as members of distinct cultures and age groups, and as adults who share responsibility in the learning/teaching process.

REFUGEE LEARNERS HAVE MADE CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AND DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE COPING SKILLS

As individuals, refugees have experienced more than a chronological age might indicate. Leaving their homelands and living in refugee camps compel refugees to deal with change and to make adjustments. Because they have lived in at least two cultures, refugees have had to learn how to adapt. This adaptation may have taken place as a result of rules that are formal (curfew, restrictions as to where refugees may go) or informal (the necessity to show respect for those in authority). Additionally, refugees may also have needed to change communication strategies as they moved from one culture to another.

Helping refugees to recognize that they have made adjustments and helping them identify the coping strategies they used are major functions of the teacher. Once refugees recognize their ability to adjust successfully, they grow more confident of their ability to adjust to the future. After recognition of this ability comes the identification of the skills and strategies which led to the adjustment. The teacher can help the learners to realize which skills and strategies will serve them best in American society. With knowledge of these skills and strategies, the refugee can then apply them in the resettlement experience.

THE USE OF THE NATIVE LANGUAGE PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PREPARING REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT

Primary reasons for using the native language in classroom instruction about culture and resettlement are accuracy and efficiency in conveying information and fuller participation of the learners who are not yet proficient in English. Another equally important reason for the use of native language is that language is laden with cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs which need to be discussed as the learners are exposed to a new culture and a new value system. Learners with varying levels of language ability are able to participate in a more meaningful and extended way when the native language is used.

The effective teacher acknowledges the refugee learners' need for use of the native language in class, including hearing the native language for translation, clarification, or explanation, or speaking the native language to discuss or question issues raised in the class when this does not detract from the teacher's objectives. Furthermore, the teacher may want to check the learners' understanding by having them respond to questions in the native language even while maintaining opportunities for the learners to practice their English language skills.

This is an important implication which relates to the use of assistant teachers who speak the native language. The assistant teacher (AT) and teacher work together closely in the teaching process which addresses both language and cultural orientation goals. The teacher draws upon the resource of the AT as a translator, cultural informant, and as a learning facilitator -- a partner in the teaching process.

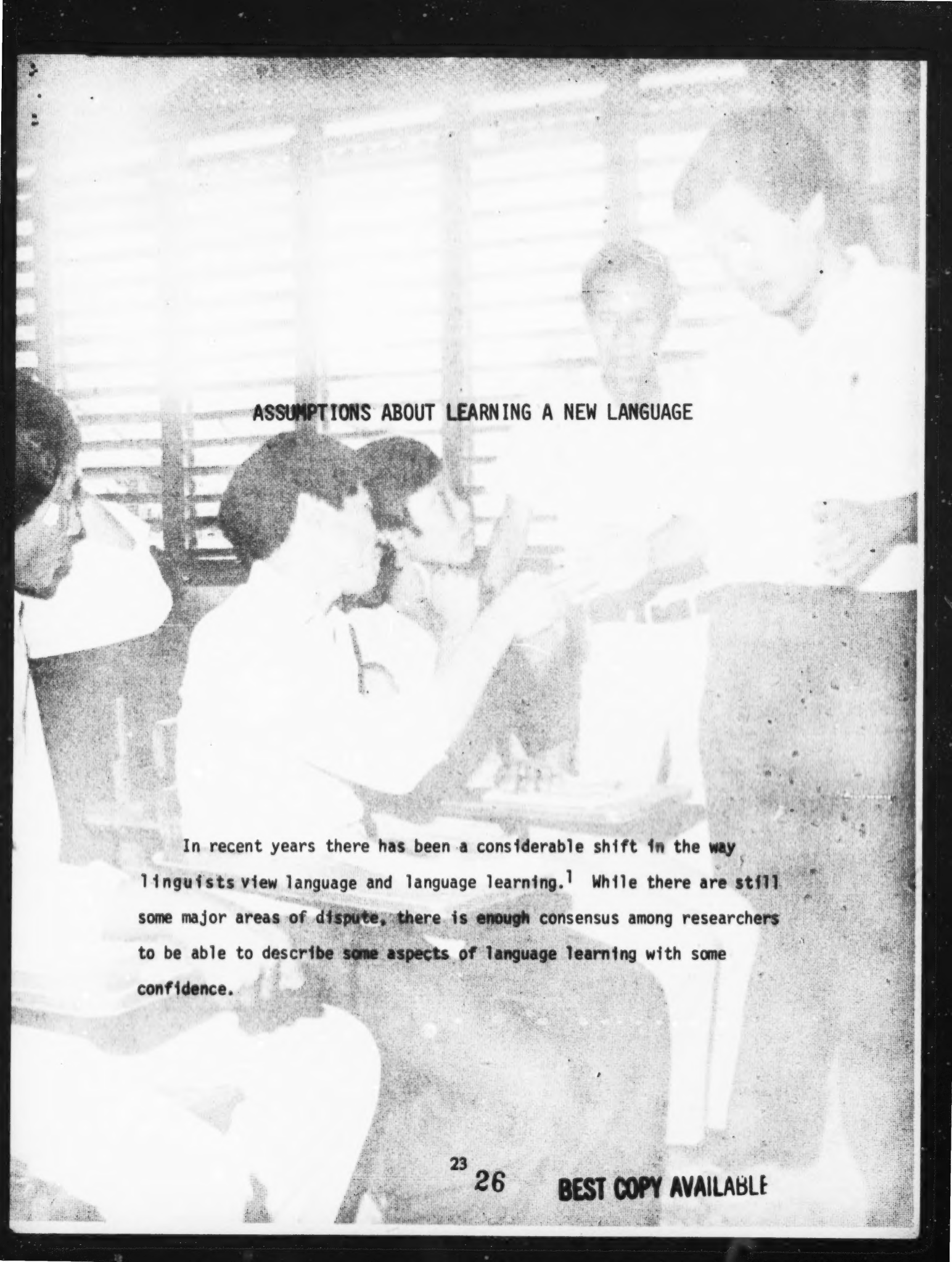
REFUGEE LEARNERS HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS CAUSED BY THEIR DISPLACEMENT AND IMPENDING RESETTLEMENT

Because many refugees have been separated from family and friends, they may experience loneliness, homesickness, and depression. They have been placed in a position of dependence because of their circumstances and this can affect their feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. Additionally, refugees are anxious about the future. They are uncertain of jobs, worried about their future living conditions, and apprehensive about the overall quality of life in America. Refugee learners carry these emotional conditions with them to the classroom.

Refugees need to develop and expand their coping skills. They need a measure of self-esteem and self-confidence. They need information about their country of resettlement, and they need to clarify and develop attitudes which will aid them in their resettlement, without losing sight of the value of their own cultural heritage.

> An effective teacher demonstrates sensitivity to the concerns and needs of refugee learners as individuals and as a group. Some needs can be met by providing information about the country of resettlement. In other cases, the teacher needs to help the learners identify and clarify their own attitudes and values. This can be done through values clarification activities, through processing of roleplays, slides, videos, and the like. Most importantly, this can occur through discussion in an open and non-judgmental environment. Following clarification, the teacher can help the learners to recognize and develop attitudes that will ease or assist in adjustment to the new culture -- attitudes such as flexibility, being tolerant of differences, and taking responsibility for one's own actions.

As much as possible teachers need to be consistent with and apply what they are teaching. This is not to say that the teacher must always emulate the behavior, attitudes and values of American society. In some cases teachers can use their knowledge of their own and their students' cultures as references for the study of cross-cultural issues. Opportunities are given to discuss values and attitudes in the light of one's cultural beliefs and values.



ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

In recent years there has been a considerable shift in the way linguists view language and language learning.[1] While there are still some major areas of dispute, there is enough consensus among researchers to be able to describe some aspects of language learning with some confidence.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING IS A NATURAL AND INNATE CAPACITY OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS

Current linguistic thinking holds that humans have an innate language acquisition device. This language acquisition device is a set of innate mental constructs or organizational principles which determine the possible form that language may take.[2] This device is present from birth and provides a predisposition to learn language.[3]

Although all humans have the capacity to learn language, just how it is learned has not been conclusively agreed upon. The relationship between acquisition processes and learning processes is presently the subject of much debate and research.[4]

In general, linguists feel that linguistic knowledge is different than other kinds of knowledge. Whether one feels that this is true because of the extreme complexity of human language or because a different form of mental processing is used only for linguistic knowledge, it implies that language learning requires different learning strategies than those used for other types of learning. While some points remain unclear, the following are generally agreed upon as principles that affect language learning.

LANGUAGE LEARNING OCCURS WHEN LEARNERS ARE EXPOSED TO UNLEARNED LINGUISTIC FORMS (WORDS, STRUCTURES, ETC.) IN THE CONTEXT OF MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION IN WHICH THE MEANING OF THE FORMS CAN BE UNDERSTOOD

Language learning is facilitated when the learner participates in meaningful communication which contains unlearned forms. The meaning of an unlearned form could be revealed either by the physical context or the linguistic context of the utterance which contains the form. Interest in the topic of an utterance, which would cause a learner to pay attention to meaning, should help language learning.

As the capacity to learn a language is innate, effective language instruction makes greater use of the learners' own abilities to learn language from natural interactions. This can be done by maximizing the learners' exposure to natural language. Natural language is not always predictable, and it includes a variety of linguistic forms. As the learner is exposed to the target language, the teacher encourages the learner to use the new language and therefore provides situations in which such communication can take place. Meaningful and realistic interactions can be achieved through communicative classroom activities, including simulations and role plays, through real life situations as they occur, and by inviting

visitors. The teacher should acknowledge the learners' attempts at communication by giving meaningful responses.

An important function of the teacher is to help the learner understand unlearned linguistic forms. For the teacher of lower level learners, this may mean using simpler, shorter units of language, gesturing, using pictures, and avoiding the abstract in favor of the concrete. For teachers of upper level learners more paraphrasing and context may be useful.

Language learning encompasses literacy skills as well as listening skills and oral language skills. Exposure to unlearned linguistic forms need not be limited solely to oral communication. Reading can provide an important source of input, and it can help learners reinforce listening and speaking abilities and to develop overall proficiency. The language teacher needs to provide reading materials at the correct level of difficulty in terms of vocabulary, syntax, and semantics. Perhaps even more important, the reading material provided or developed by the teacher should be interesting to the learners. Interest in the content can outweigh other factors to a large extent.

LANGUAGE LEARNING OCCURS IN STAGES

The learner's ability to comprehend or produce language is affected by his stage of language development. It appears that most learners pass through a pre-production stage in which they are unable to create their own utterances.[5] It appears, however, that considerable learning can take place during this period even if the learner doesn't speak.[6]

There is considerable evidence that knowledge of some structures facilitates learning of other structures.[7]

Once learners begin to create their own utterances, they are able to use only a subset of the total grammar of the language they are learning. A full command of all the grammatical structures of a language is not needed for considerable communication to be possible, and in fact, some learners never achieve a high level of grammatical accuracy[8]. Evidence exists to suggest that this may be due to affective factors or to a lack of formal language study.[9]

The teacher's expectations for language learners should change as the learners progress through different stages. Beginning language learners aren't expected to create their own utterances right away. The teacher can use listening activities to provide comprehensible input without requiring learners to begin speaking. Developmental stages do not mean progression from listening to speaking to reading to writing. Listening and reading are considered input modes, while speaking and writing are output modes. The effective language teacher provides for input and output at the different stages of language development. Formal language study (e.g., grammar) may help learners develop language proficiency and should be provided when appropriate for the individual group of learners.

ERRORS ARE A NATURAL PART OF THE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

It is evident that as learners pass through different stages of language development, many of the utterances they produce will contain errors. Errors can provide evidence of the learners' innate strategies to learn the target language. It appears that most second language learner errors are the result of incomplete proficiency in a new linguistic system rather than interference from the first language. In any case, errors can occur as the learners test the conclusions they draw about the language being learned.

Research has shown that most forms of direct intervention--error correction--have little effect on the errors which learners produce.[10] This may be more the case where conversational fluency and communication are the more significant goals of the learner. However, according to Krahnke and Christison, "Some feedback on formal (grammatical) adequacy is almost certainly required for acquisition to continue".[11]

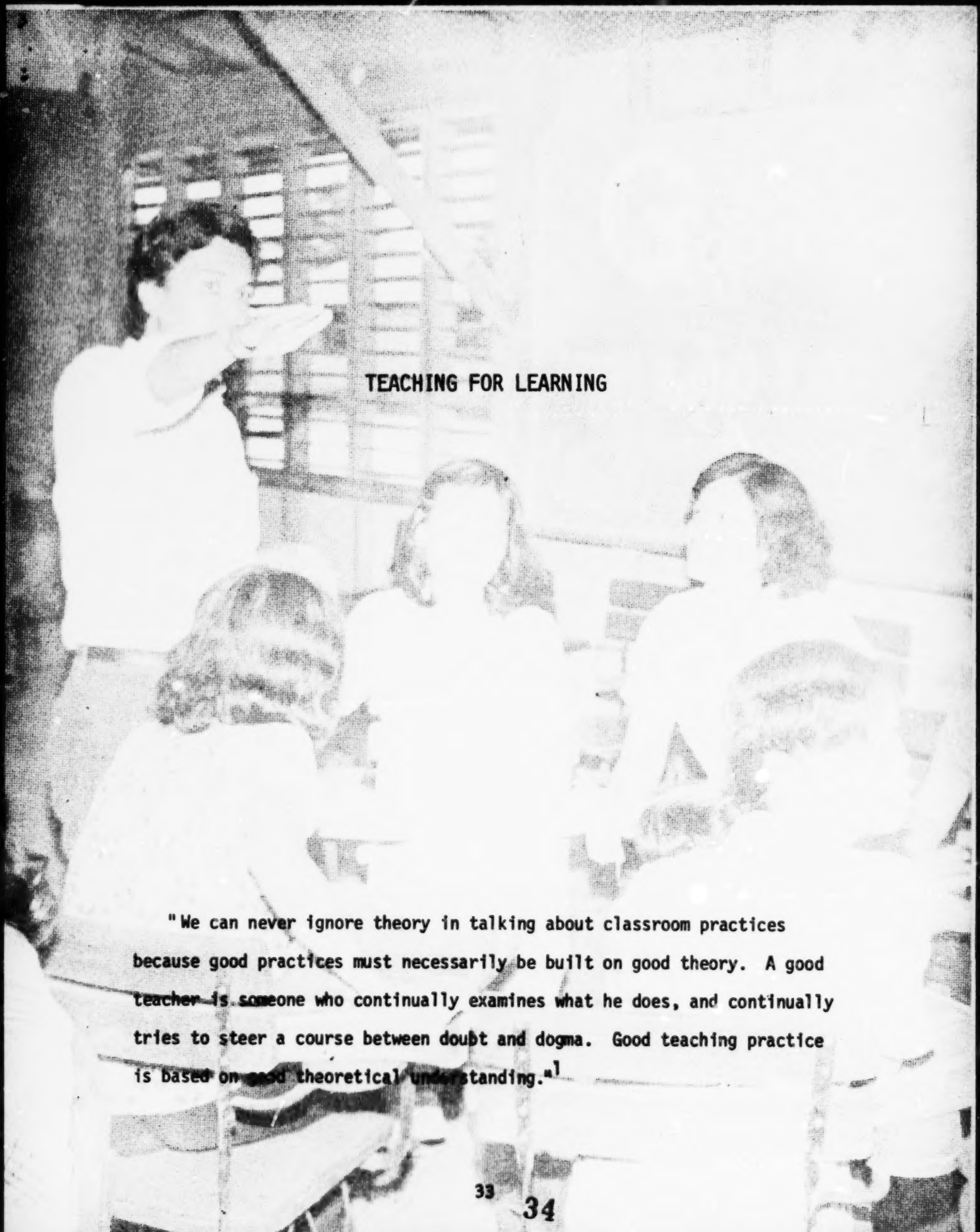
> The effective language teacher expects that errors will occur, accepts them, and uses them. Errors provide a source of diagnostic information about the learners' language development. The teacher uses errors as a way to measure language learning and to adjust the lesson as necessary.
>
> With communication as the goal, the teacher focuses on the meaning rather than the form of the learners' language. With accuracy as the goal, the teacher provides feedback or develops strategies for the learners to become aware of errors. The effective language teacher is ready to explain, correct, or model pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical patterns when learners ask for or are ready for such assistance. The teacher adjusts the focus on form,accuracy,and fluency according to the lesson objectives and the learners' needs and interests.

LANGUAGE LEARNING IS AFFECTED BY THE LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS

Primary factors in language learning, as in all learning, are the attitude and motivation of the learner. Part of the learner's attitude is a willingness to take risks. Risk-taking is especially crucial in language learning because language learners must risk looking foolish, making mistakes, doing and saying the unfamiliar, and sounding childish in order to gain the learning to communicate. Research indicates that the "good language learner" is one who is willing to take risks. Beebe advocates, "moderate risk-taking as the optimal behavior, where students strive for success, keeping a limited reliance on chance and a realistic appraisal of their own skill."[12]

> The language teacher realizes that learners must take risks to learn the new language. This appears to be especially true when language is used for communication, i.e., when the teacher creates opportunities for practical and functional usage of the target language by the learners as they move through different states of language ability. The effective teacher recognizes that while a challenging learning environment makes risk-taking meaningful, a relaxed classroom atmosphere and a non-judgmental attitude on the part of the teacher will encourage learners to try to communicate without being afraid to make errors or appear foolish. The teacher supports and encourages the learners in their attempts to use the target language.

TEACHING



TEACHING FOR LEARNING

"We can never ignore theory in talking about classroom practices because good practices must necessarily be built on good theory. A good teacher is someone who continually examines what he does, and continually tries to steer a course between doubt and dogma. Good teaching practice is based on good theoretical understanding."[1]

Good teaching is based upon what we know about learning. The basic premise of this model is that teachers make decisions based on their knowledge of what learning involves and what the learners' needs and interests are. There can be no one right way to teach. Teaching involves planning, knowledge of content, and the ability to make informed decisions about what and how to teach.

This section of the guide will address effective teaching practices and planning for teaching.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

1. THE TEACHER DETERMINES AN APPROPRIATE OBJECTIVE AND TEACHES TO IT.

In order to determine an appropriate objective, the teacher must first assess and diagnose the learners' needs and determine the particular content to be covered, consistent with the goals of the program. An appropriate objective is consistent with the content to be taught and with the learners' needs and abilities. Once an appropriate objective has been determined, all teaching and learning activities are directed toward the intended objective(s) of the lesson.

The teacher also makes decisions about the expenditure of time and energy toward the intended objective. The teacher should decide which by-ways are productive and which are not. There may occur during a class what Havighurst termed the teachable moment.[2] A teachable moment occurs when the desire or need to learn becomes of great importance and assumes

an urgency for the learner. The teacher may not have planned to teach or emphasize the topic or subject within the lesson. Examples of a teachable moment might be when a refugee wants to learn the meaning of a new word, or wants to learn to cash a money order he has just received. The teacher decides how often and how far from the intended objective the class should travel so that time spent is beneficial to all.

The teacher can increase the probability of the objectives being attained by making the objectives clear to the learners so they understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. The teacher can promote learning by choosing and sequencing activities which lead logically and directly to the objectives.

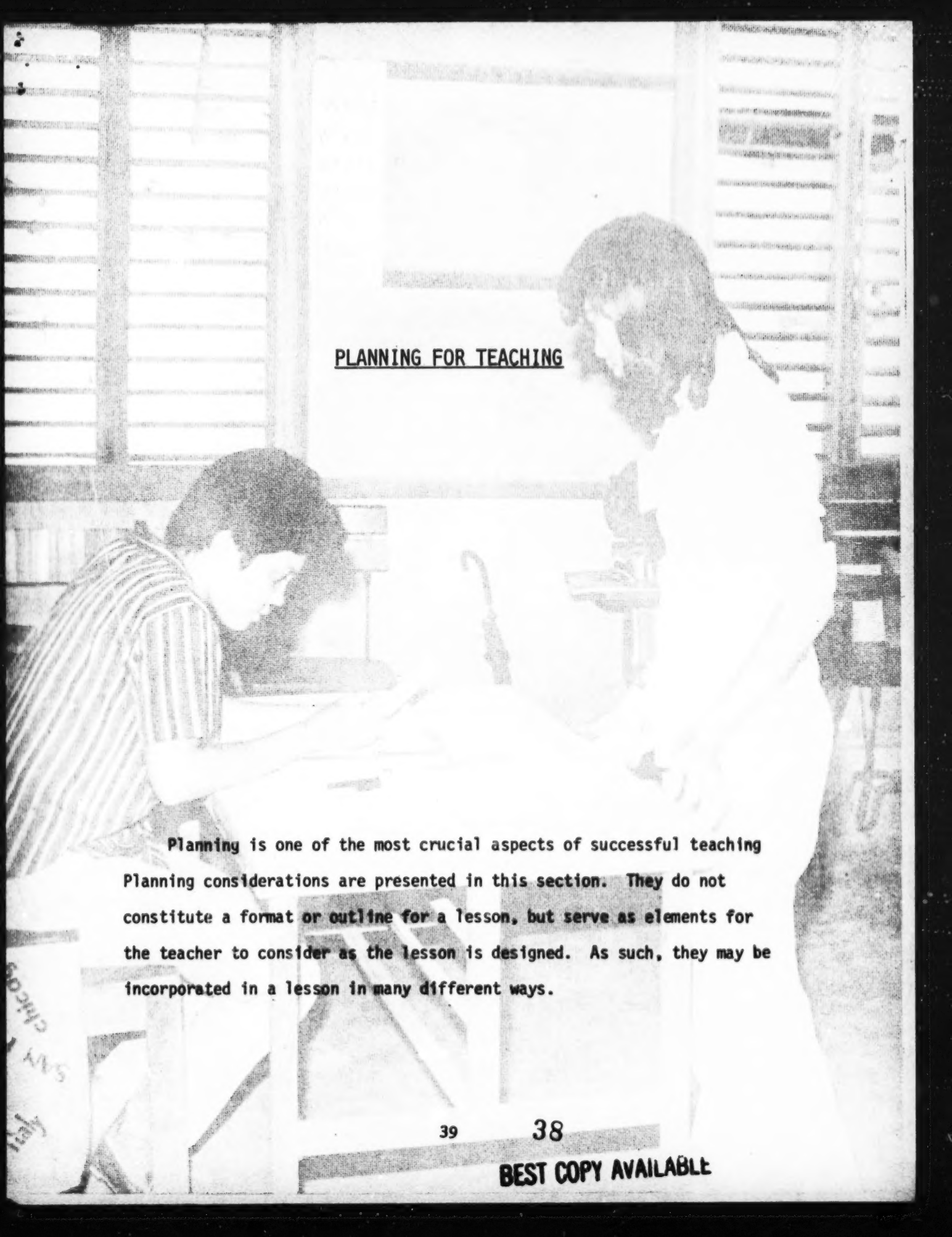
2. <u>THE TEACHER ENSURES THAT THE LEARNING ACTIVITY IS AT THE CORRECT LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY FOR THE LEARNERS</u>.

The lesson, whether it is using a payphone, asking directions on a city street, developing coping skills for dealing with American neighbors, or learning the Roman alphabet, must be at the appropriate level of difficulty for the learners. The learner must already have the pre-requisite skills necessary to understand the lesson within a reasonable amount of time. The teacher must assess and re-assess the learners to determine objectives and activities which are appropriately leveled. The teacher must also pre-check mastery of whatever supporting skills may be necessary to carry out the activities.

3. THE TEACHER CONSTANTLY MONITORS LEARNING TO ADJUST THE LEARNING ACTIVITY OR OBJECTIVE AS APPROPRIATE.

The teacher monitors the class to see if the learners understand the lesson. This can be done by watching for gestures of understanding, doubt, interest, frustration, or confusion, and by checking the participation of all the learners. The teacher also listens to the questions and responses of the learners. By observing what the learners say and do, the teacher conducts continuous assessment of learner performance as the basis for adjustment. The teacher should also seek and listen to learner feedback about the lesson.

The teacher must ensure that each activity continues to challenge and stimulate but is added to a solid foundation.



PLANNING FOR TEACHING

Planning is one of the most crucial aspects of successful teaching Planning considerations are presented in this section. They do not constitute a format or outline for a lesson, but serve as elements for the teacher to consider as the lesson is designed. As such, they may be incorporated in a lesson in many different ways.

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The first task for the teacher is to decide what content will be taught. It may be information, concepts, skills, or attitude development. The content decision should be based upon the knowledge and experience the learners already have. This means the teacher needs to assess prior learning and learner needs in relation to the curriculum, text, or audio-visual material to be used for the lesson.

The next decision of the teacher is what the lesson objective(s) will be. Given the content decision, the teacher decides on ways for assessing learning or checking for comprehension to allow the learners to demonstrate that learning has occurred. After the content to be taught and the objectives for the learners have been determined, the teacher is ready to plan the lesson considering the following elements.

OBJECTIVE: HOW WILL THE LEARNERS FIND OUT WHAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON ARE AND WHY THEY ARE LEARNING THEM?

In most cases learners will learn more quickly if they know the objective, and if they understand how the objective relates to them and to their past learning. Learning may be facilitated by having the teacher explain the objective or by having the learners discover the objective.

INPUT: HOW WILL THE LEARNERS GET THE CONTENT THEY WILL NEED TO ATTAIN THE LESSON OBJECTIVES?

The content to be learned is called the input. The teacher considers what form of input might be most effective for the learners. Input can come through teacher lecture, elicitation from the learners themselves, through a processed simulation or roleplay. Additionally books, slides, videos,

or a visit to the Model House can be the source of input. The teacher is responsible for deciding what information is necessary to achieve the objectives and then determining the best way for those particular learners to obtain that information.

MODEL: HOW WILL THE CONTENT BE MADE CLEARER FOR THE LEARNERS?

The model provides a concrete example of what the learners should do or know as a result of the lesson. Learners can watch a "model" job interview which exemplifies the characteristics of a good job interview as described by the teacher; a teacher can model the outward behaviors of an attitude to make an abstract concept (such as prejudice) more concrete. A good model gives learners a guide or a basis of comparison for behavior, language, or attitudes, but learners need not always say or do exactly what was presented in the model.

Sometimes, a model may be part of the input. For example, when a teacher speaks English naturally with the learner, the model and input are provided at the same time. The question, "How will the content be made more concrete?" may not necessarily involve a separate component in the lesson. It is a consideration throughout the lesson.

ASSESSMENT: HOW WILL THE LEARNER DEMONSTRATE UNDERSTANDING AND LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE LESSON?

Assessment--checking for understanding--provides continual diagnostic information for the teacher. It indicates if there has been adequate input, if a model is needed, or if the learners understand the content being taught.

Learner assessment can be done formally through written, oral, or performance tests. Informal assessment can occur through written or oral questions, group activities, role-plays, simulations, games, etc. Assessment needs to be planned into a lesson and fulfills the monitor function described under Effective Teaching Practices. This assessment provides the information the teacher needs to adjust a lesson to the learners' needs.

PRACTICE: WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE LEARNERS TO USE THE CONTENT IN THE LESSON?

Once the learners have demonstrated their understanding of the content and are ready to practice, they can be given opportunities to use what they have learned. The teacher provides the activities and exercises which put that knowledge to work. Initially, learners may need a lot of guided practice (practice with the help of the teacher). As learners gain proficiency, less guidance is necessary. Ultimately, the goal of all practice is to bring learners to a level of proficiency at which they can become independent of the teacher.

These five considerations--objective, input, model, assessment, and practice--may often overlap. One activity may be input for one learner while it is practice for another. Another activity may model how to order food in a restaurant for one group of learners, while it assesses how well the role-players understand how to order. In the implementation of the lesson plan, these considerations should be reflected by the conscious choices of the teacher as to what should be included in the lesson and what function it serves. Planning for teaching, as with the actual teaching performance itself, should always consider the learner.

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